



# Gideon Lincecum Chapter Texas Master Naturalist™

June  
2009

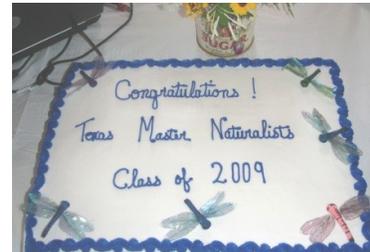
## NEWS

### CONGRATULATIONS to the CLASS of 2009

*Martha Koslosky, Membership chair; Photos by Cindy Rodibaugh*

Welcome to all those who just completed the new class. I hope that you enjoyed all of the lectures and field trips and that you found a topic of special interest that you will pursue for further knowledge.

For your own recordkeeping, any hours over forty that you logged for the classroom sessions can be counted as advanced training. A total of 8 additional hours is required and many of you have already accomplished that by being able to attend most of the sessions. Your next goal is to obtain the 40 hours of volunteer work and some of you are already hard at work. Let me know when you have met all three of the requirements. You will then receive a certificate from the State office and a very



colorful dragonfly pin and you will be an official CERTIFIED TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST.



I also have plenty of recertification pins for 2009. For those who have already certified in a previous year, send me your 40/8 hours so that you can get your pin to add to your collection. A new pin is designed for each year so that you can have a nice collection to leave to your grandchildren.

*The chapter celebrated graduation at Winedale on Saturday, May 9*

### MAY 16 CANOE TRIP



*The group gathers to put in at Newman Bottom, on Yegua Creek.*



*James and Jonell Parker, along with 17 other chapter members and friends, enjoy the leisurely paddle down Yegua Creek to Lake Somerville. Take out was at Nails Creek State Park boat launch area.*

# Volunteering

## INDIAN CREEK WORK DAY

*Carol Montgomery*

It is very impressive to see what 11 hard working volunteers accomplished at Indian Creek on Saturday, May 30.

Two sections of fence posts were put in; invasives were poisoned and the area around the big tree at the end of the new trail was cleared. The area just gets better and better. It is becoming a unique place to enjoy nature.

We now have two benches placed near the creek. There is mulch at the head of each trail and the area to be mulched is defined, so anyone needing volunteer hours can spend some time there on their own. I am working on getting the fence railings ready to put in. Another work day will be announced soon.



*The footbridge at Indian Creek*



*Elisa Henderson gets down and dirty.*



*Joy Nutt teaches a lesson about producers and consumers*

## BRENHAM ISD OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

*Carol Montgomery*

On May 13, 14, and 22 Master Naturalists volunteered to help teach at the Brenham ISD Outdoor Classroom at Nails Creek State Park. We had about one hundred 3rd graders each day, divided into four activities: wildflower identification, animal charades, compass reading, and a game that helped the kids understand the food web.

This volunteer activity was a good way to learn more about the park and the flora and fauna there. The next opportunity to help with the Outdoor Classroom will be in October, when the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders will come out to Birch Creek State Park. Those of you who like working with children will find this a great way to earn some volunteer hours.



**JULY MEMBERS'  
BUSINESS MEETING  
CANCELLED**

*Next Meeting:  
Saturday, September 19  
9 am at Winedale*

## ***DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES***

Terry Hibbits, a dedicated nature photographer and former biology teacher, presented a program about these beautiful and beneficial creatures on Saturday, May 16. Here is our Master Naturalist symbol, the Cyrano darter dragonfly.



### **FUTURE PROGRAMS**

- **Saturday, September 19, 1 pm** – Introduction to Butterflies and how to do a butterfly count, Dan Hardy
- **Saturday, November 21, 1 pm** – Conservation Easements, Don Steinbach

These programs will be open to the public and will be in the Meadows classroom at Winedale.

## ***HERB SOCIETY***

### ***Belinda Weatherly***

The next opportunity to volunteer at the Winedale McGregor Herb Garden will be Wednesday, June 17 at 9 am. This will be the last opportunity this summer.

In September there will be a celebration of the originators and founders of the garden. This will be held on Thursday, Sept 10.

Verena Aeschbacher has expressed her gratitude to the volunteers for making the work go so much faster. It is a lovely place to work and nice to be included in the long line of people who have tended gardens around this historic house.

## ***BLUEBIRDS AT BRENHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL***

### ***Susan Solari***

It is about halfway through the Eastern Bluebird nesting season (February – July); and I actually have 5 nestlings preparing to leave their nest any day now. “Mom and Dad” feed them almost all day long; taking turns dropping a worm into a yawning beak and removing the fecal sac presented in return by that baby. Both parents participate throughout the process of selecting the sight, building and tending the nest, and caring for the nestlings.

I am definitely hooked on bluebirds! Fortunately the Gideon Lincecum chapter is expanding their outdoor classroom activities at Brenham Elementary School to include a monitoring program for the five bluebird boxes already there. We will be able to develop a schedule for maintenance, cleaning and monitoring the nests; and teaching the children how to enjoy the bluebirds, too.

Students will observe activities of the nests, record data and participate in each milestone of the nestlings! They will also alert us if any of the boxes or nests need some maintenance. After the female lays eggs and begins incubation, it is approximately 5 weeks before the nestlings fledge. That is a perfect ‘time block’ for the learning experience: one or two weeks is a bit short, and not much happens in that amount of time. Five – six weeks is really too long to hold the attention of most young children (and some of us older kids too).

Did you know that bluebirds have many predators including cats (feral and domestic), snakes, raccoons, hawks, wasps, yellow jackets, red ants and house sparrows? And although the European starling is not considered a predator, this bird is a serious competitor for food sources and territory. Another interesting fact about Eastern Bluebirds: there are albino bluebirds – all white – approximately ½ of one percent of the total population. Definitely a rare sight; so if you see one, report it right away!

We are working on our lesson plans and arranging the final details with Nancy Oertli, Science Coordinator for Brenham ISD, and Larry Pierce, Washington County AgriLife Extension agent. During the summer we hope to put the program in motion for the students and teachers next fall.





## ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



### *Identifying and Evaluating Native Prairies*

*Saturday, June 27, 9 am*

**Quebe Prairie  
6505 Quebe Rd. I  
Washington County, near Brenham**

Dr. Fred Smeins of TAMU will lead this field day sponsored by the Native Prairie Restoration committee of our chapter. We will get valuable experience identifying grasses and forbs that characterize a native prairie.

*Charlotte von Rosenberg, Native Prairie  
Restoration committee chair*



### *Native Prairie Restoration Symposium*

*Friday, July 10, 1 pm -6:30 pm*

**Cat Spring Ag Society Hall  
13035 Hall Road  
Cat Spring ,TX**

Sponsored by Larry Pierce and Philip Shackelford, AgriLife Extension agents for Washington and Austin Counties, this event provides information and management practices necessary to reintroduce native grasses to your land. \$20 fee covers meal, handout materials and refreshments.

- Historical Perspective of Native Rangelands, Dr. Barron Rector
- Grazing Native Prairies - Methods/ Benefits/Hazards , Dr. Larry Redmond
- Restoration Methodology - From Bermuda to Bluestem, Larry Pierce
- Cost Share Program Basics, Gary Stephens
- Seed Cooperative, Mike McMurray
- Soil Fertility, Dr. Mark McFarland
- Restoration Success Stories, Jim Willis

*Philip Shackelford at 979-865-2072,  
Email: [p-shackelford@tamu.edu](mailto:p-shackelford@tamu.edu) .*

### *Range, Water and Wildlife Workshop*

*Friday, July 10, 8:30 am-3 pm*

Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado County Soil and Water Conservation District are hosting this event at Mentz Hall just east of Columbus. The workshop is designed for traditional landowners such as livestock producers as well as for new landowners who have an interest in range, water, and wildlife management.

Presentations will cover range and water stewardship, making stocking rate decisions, preparing for the next drought, cattle productivity, rainwater harvesting, and integrated wildlife and livestock management as used at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area.

**Download [pdf flyer](#) for more information about speakers, how to register and location of workshop.**

The workshop fee is \$12 and covers the catered lunch and refreshments.

**Attendees are asked to RSVP by July 3rd.**

*Bobby Eichler, Technical Guidance  
Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife  
Department (979) 968-9942*

*Find out how Barron Rector will manage appearances at both July 10 workshops!*



*Quebe Prairie in the summer of 2008*

## HOUSTON TOAD VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

*Dave Redden, President*

Paul Crump, Amphibian Conservation Manager, Department of Conservation and Science, Houston Zoo, has invited members of our chapter to participate in a citizen science project. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting audio surveys of the endangered Houston toad in our area.

Several of our chapter members have already volunteered to help conduct the survey which will take place next February through early May. Training and the necessary equipment will be provided by USFWS.

They are especially interested in Austin and Colorado counties, but are also likely to be interested in our other counties if we have volunteers to collect data. Currently Houston Zoo staff members are collecting this data but they are unable to adequately cover the area needed.

If you think you would like to help with surveys next February – early May, once per week at dark for a couple of hours, please contact me and I will add you to the list of volunteers for this project.

USFWS will assign us routes with predetermined stops. We will sit for five minutes at each stop and listen for toads. The training will help us recognize our target toad. There will be about 12 stops on each route. It will take about two hours to run a survey.

Please let me know if you would like to volunteer to go out at dusk on spring evenings and listen to the sounds of the night. I will keep you posted on when the training will be offered.

For more information about the Houston toad, visit:

[TPWD Endangered Species—Houston Toad](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—Houston Toad](#)



*What are you gonna do when  
the well runs dry?*



**South Central Texas  
Water Conservation  
Conference**

**Saturday, October 3  
All Day**

This program will be a combined effort of several organizations: TPWD, Texas Wildlife Association, Master Gardeners, Washington County Wildlife Society, Texas AgriLife Extension, Native Plant Society and Gideon Lincecum chapter of Texas Master Naturalist. More to come. . .

*Contact: Larry Joe Doherty, Dave Redden  
for more information*



*Bufo houstonensis  
Houston toad*

### *Yahoo Group*

Sign up for our chapter's Yahoo Group so you can post your photos, chat about nature, ask for plant and animal ID help. To join, visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/glmasternaturalists/>

### **Gideon Lincecum**

### *NEWS*

Published every other month  
Contact [Jan Redden](#) with your story  
ideas and news items.